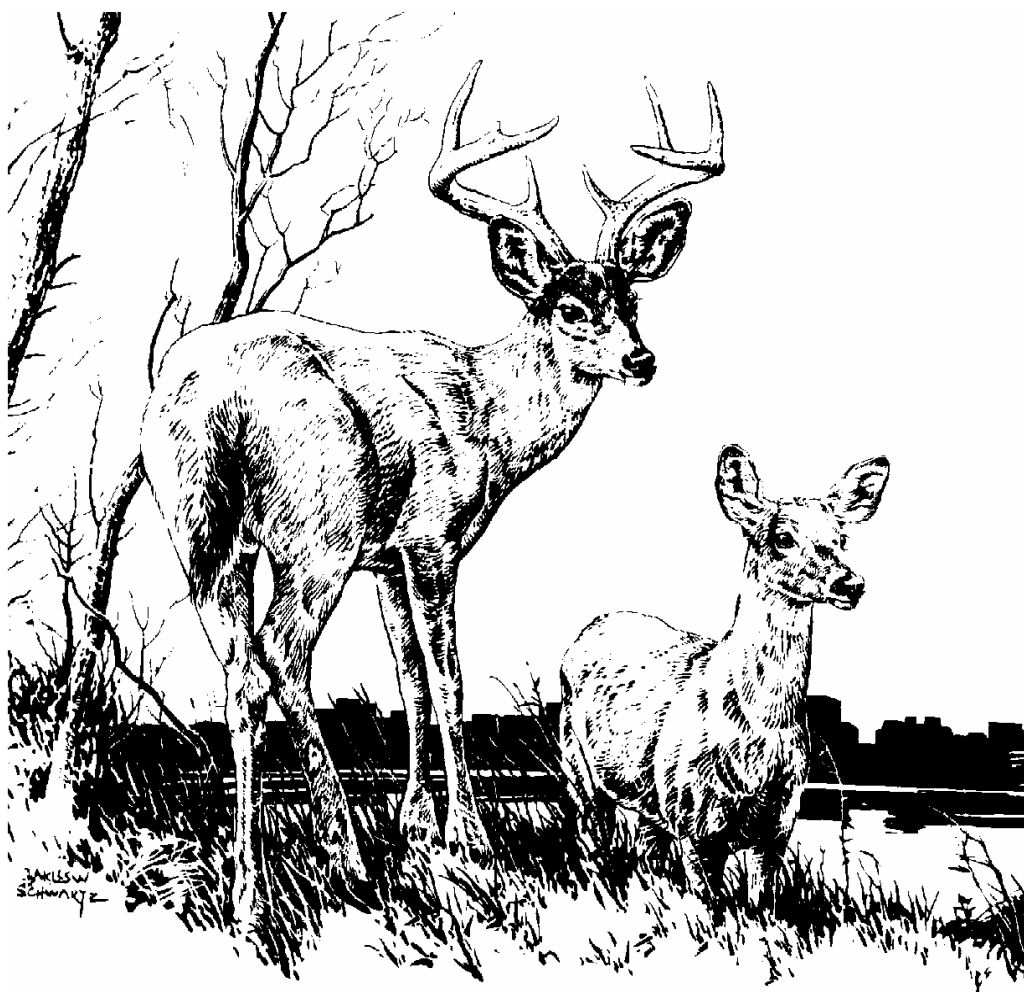


2003 Indiana Deer Season Summary



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Season Framework and Regulations

General

The 2003 Indiana deer hunting season was comprised of 4 segments: early archery (1 October-30 November), firearms (15-30 November), muzzleloader (6-21 December), and late archery (6 December-4 January). This was the 10th year that the early archery season extended into and throughout the firearm season. This was the 8th year that the late archery season extended through the first Sunday in January rather than ending on the last day in December.

This was the 7th year that the crossbow was legal for hunting under an archery license by non-handicapped hunters. The crossbow was eligible for use only in the late archery season and only for antlerless deer. Special public hunts were held at Muscatatuck and Big Oaks National Wildlife Refuges, and Naval Surface Warfare Center-Crane and Camp Atterbury Army National Guard Training Site.

For an 8th year, archers could harvest deer in designated urban zones that did not count towards any other statewide bag limit. Each deer required a separate additional archery license. Starting in 2002, the archery season in the urban deer zone opened 2 weeks prior to the opening of the statewide early archery season. Additionally, starting in 2002, archers were allowed to harvest up to 4 extra urban zone deer (4 antlerless or 3 antlerless and 1 antlered) whereas in earlier years only 2 extra deer could be taken which could not include an antlered deer.

The statewide archery bag limit was 2 deer. Hunters could take 1 deer on a regular archery license and an additional deer on an extra archery license. Either archery license could be used to take an either-sex deer, but a total of only one (1) antlered deer could be taken by any hunter during all statewide seasons combined using archery, firearm, or muzzleloader licenses.

The gun bag limit was 1 antlered deer during the firearms season and 1 either-sex deer during the muzzleloader season subject to the total of 1 antlered deer during all combined deer seasons. A single firearms license was required to hunt with any or all shotgun, muzzleloader, or handgun during the firearms season, and a muzzleloader license (separate from the firearms license) was required to hunt during the muzzleloader season. The resident deer license fee was \$24.00 and the nonresident fee was \$120.75. Resident landowners and lessees who hunted on land they own or lease and gained agricultural benefit from were exempt from purchasing deer licenses.

Antlerless Permits

This was the 20th year antlerless deer could be taken during the firearms season by use of bonus county antlerless permits in addition to the above bag limits. Initially, the bonus county antlerless permits were limited to a specific quota for each county and were only valid for the specified county. One permit per hunter was available via a drawing. During the first years of the program, the left-over permits were destroyed. The program was liberalized in subsequent years. During the last year of the quota system (1995), individual hunters could pick up multiple left-over permits. Left-over permits were available on a first come basis at one site in each specific county where the permits were valid.

The bonus antlerless program was revised in 1996 so that hunters did not have to apply through a drawing; 2003 was the 8th year of this modified antlerless bag limit and permit disbursement system. An unlimited number of permits were available at every deer license vendor statewide, and each permit could be used in any county in the state. Permits were available to both resident and non-resident hunters. Each permit was valid for 1 antlerless deer, and hunters were allowed to take up to 4 antlerless deer statewide. Hunters could not exceed individual county bag limits, which ranged from 0 to 4, and were published in the Hunting and Trapping Guide. Since 1993, the bonus county permits could be used during the muzzleloader and late archery seasons if they were not filled during the firearms season. In 2003, 5 counties had a bag limit of 1 and regulations that restricted the season of use for Bonus Antlerless permits to the last 4 days of the firearms season plus the muzzleloader and late archery seasons. One county had a Bonus Antlerless bag limit of zero (0).

Number of Deer Harvested

A total of 106,986 deer was legally harvested in Indiana during the 2003 season. This harvest was a 2.5% increase from the 104,428 deer harvested during 2002. Compared to 2002, the antlered buck harvest of 49,533 represented a 5.0% increase from last year, and the antlerless harvest of 57,453 was similar to that of 2002 (57,251).

The early archery season harvest of 19,964 deer comprised 18.7% of the total harvest and was 10% greater than during 2002 (Table 1). Two hundred and eighty-two of these deer were harvested during the early urban archery season (15-30 September). The late archery season harvest of 1,244 deer comprised 1.2% of the total harvest and was 10.5% greater than during 2002. The combined early and late archery season harvest of 21,208 was 10.0% greater than the 19,272 deer harvested during 2002. Antlerless deer comprised 56% of the total archery harvest, which was 4 percentage points less than last year.

The total crossbow harvest for the year, including deer taken on handicapped hunter crossbow permits, was 415 animals compared with 387 for 2002. During the late archery season, the crossbow harvest was 67 deer compared with 59 in 2002 and 20 in 2001.

The firearms season harvest of 71,597 deer was 3% less than during 2002 and comprised 66.9% of the total harvest (Tables 1 and 2). Antlerless harvest (34,637) decreased 5.6% for this season, and the antlered buck harvest (36,961) was similar to that of last year (37,119). Antlerless deer comprised ~48% of the firearm season harvest, which was a 2 percentage point decrease from 2002.

The muzzleloader season harvest of 14,181 deer comprised 13.3% of the total harvest and was up 25% from 2002 (Table 1). As in past years, a very large percentage (77.1%) of the muzzleloader season harvest was composed of antlerless deer.

Total deer harvest has increased annually since 2000. Approximately 1.97 million deer have been legally harvested during the past 52 deer hunting seasons in Indiana (Fig. 1).

Table 1. Number of deer harvested in each segment of the 2003 Indiana deer-hunting season. Percent change compared to 2002 is shown in parentheses.

Season	Number of deer harvested		
	Antlered	Antlerless	Total
Early Archery (1 Oct.-30 Nov.)	9,084 (22.8)	10,880 (1.2)	19,964 (10.0)
Firearms (15-30 Nov.)	36,961 (-0.4)	34,637 (-5.6)	71,597 (-3.0)
Muzzleloader (6-21 Dec.)	3,242 (32.8)	10,939 (22.7)	14,181 (24.9)
Late Archery (6 Dec.-4 Jan.)	246 (11.8)	998 (10.2)	1,244 (10.5)
Totals	49,533 (5.0)	57,453 (0.4)	106,986 (2.5)

Table 2. Number of deer harvested on each day of the 2003 Indiana firearms season (includes deer taken by bow, shotgun, pistol, and muzzleloader).

Date	Day	Antlered		Antlerless		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
15 November	Sat	13,748	64	7,675	36	21,423	30
16 November	Sun	5,970	59	4,091	41	10,061	14
17 November	Mon	1,946	56	1,511	44	3,457	5
18 November	Tue	591	55	491	45	1,082	1
19 November	Wed	1,516	53	1,330	47	2,846	4
20 November	Thu	1,420	51	1,343	49	2,763	4
21 November	Fri	1,278	51	1,222	49	2,500	3
22 November	Sat	2,820	47	3,169	53	5,989	8
23 November	Sun	1,382	43	1,836	57	3,218	4
24 November	Mon	465	44	600	56	1,065	1
25 November	Tue	667	39	1,047	61	1,714	2
26 November	Wed	659	39	1,041	61	1,700	2
27 November	Thu	730	38	1,209	62	1,939	3
28 November	Fri	1,083	35	2,053	65	3,136	4
29 November	Sat	1,610	32	3,495	68	5,105	7
30 November	Sun.	1,358	31	3,036	69	4,394	6
Totals*		37,243		35,149		72,392	

* Totals differ from those in previous table because date of harvest is not known for some registered deer and this table includes deer from both the firearms season and the last 16 days of the early archery season.

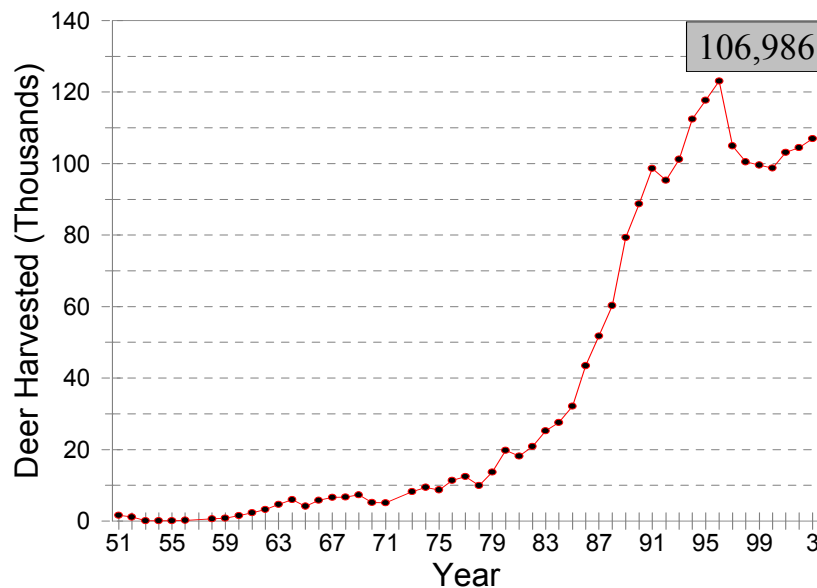


Figure 1. The number of deer harvested in Indiana deer hunting seasons 1951-2003.

Harvest by Type of Hunting Equipment

Five types of equipment were legal for hunting deer during 2003: bow, shotgun, muzzleloader, handgun, and crossbow. The above equipment types accounted for 19.4, 57.7, 21.2, 1.3, and 0.4% of the total deer harvest respectively (Table 3). Harvest by bow, muzzleloader, and crossbow increased 10, 15, and 7%, respectively, from 2002, while harvest by shotgun and handgun decreased 3 and 12%, respectively.

Table 3. Number of deer harvested by type of legal hunting equipment during the 1999-2003. Approximate percent of total harvest shown in parentheses.

Equipment type	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Bow*	20,010 (20)	22,131 (22)	23,765 (23)	18,911 (18)	20,748 (19)
Shotgun	62,849 (63)	59,994 (61)	59,688 (58)	63,794 (61)	61,674 (58)
Muzzleloader	14,739 (15)	14,704 (15)	17,738 (17)	19,711 (19)	22,724 (21)
Handgun	1,796 (2)	1,615 (2)	1,562 (2)	1,625 (2)	1,425 (1)
Crossbow					
Handicap	174 (0)	227 (0)	390 (0)	328 (0)	348 (0)
Late archery	50 (0)	54 (0)	20 (0)	59 (0)	67 (0)
Totals	99,618	98,725	103,163	104,428	106,986

* Crossbow harvest is not included in bow harvest. Values within this table do not exactly equal those tallied by season (page 3) due to the fact that multiple equipment types can be used during the firearm season. Muzzleloaders may also be used during both the firearm and muzzleloader season. Additionally, differences arise due to the different methods required to analyze data when either the equipment or the season is unknown.

Harvest by License Status

Licensed resident hunters accounted for 83.3% of the total deer harvest. Licensed non-resident hunters harvested 1.9% of the total harvest. Landowners and lessees who hunted on their own land without a license and military personnel on official leave status accounted for 14.8% of the total deer harvest. Of the deer harvested by license-exempt hunters, 98.3% were taken by landowners/tenants and 1.7% by military personnel on leave.

Age and Sex of the Harvest

The age and sex structure of the 2003 deer harvest was 46.3% adult males (antlered bucks), 33.9% adult females, 9.6% male fawns (button bucks), and 10.2% female fawns (Table

4). About 54% of the antlered bucks and 40% of the adult does harvested during 2003 were yearlings (1.5 years old).

Table 4. Sex and age structure of the Indiana deer harvest during 1987-2003, as determined from mandatory check stations.

Year	Adults		Fawns		Total (%)
	Males (%)	Females (%)	Males (%)	Females (%)	
1987	29,530 (57)	11,139 (21)	6,164 (12)	4,945 (10)	51,778 (100)
1988	34,358 (57)	13,170 (22)	7,050 (12)	5,656 (9)	60,234 (100)
1989	40,503 (51)	19,464 (24)	10,737 (14)	8,614 (11)	79,318 (100)
1990	43,080 (48)	23,680 (27)	12,373 (14)	9,630 (11)	88,763 (100)
1991	41,593 (42)	31,211 (32)	14,626 (15)	11,253 (11)	98,683 (100)
1992	43,508 (46)	25,387 (27)	14,262 (15)	12,157 (13)*	95,314 (100)
1993	44,424 (44)	27,704 (27)	14,751 (15)	14,335 (14)*	101,214 (100)
1994	50,812 (45)	32,466 (29)	15,487 (14)	13,651 (12)*	112,416 (100)
1995	47,098 (40)	40,946 (35)	16,398 (14)	13,287 (11)*	117,729 (100)
1996	47,315 (38)	39,913 (32)	17,307 (14)	18,551 (15)*	123,086 (100)
1997	42,537 (41)	35,163 (34)	14,039 (13)	13,198 (12)*	104,937(100)
1998	44,955 (45)	30,711 (31)	12,257 (12)	12,538 (12)*	100,461 (100)
1999	46,371 (46)	30,474 (31)	11,645 (12)	11,129 (11)*	99,618 (100)
2000	44,621 (45)	31,986 (32)	11,072 (11)	11,046 (11)*	98,725 (100)
2001	48,357 (47)	31,806 (31)	11,230 (11)	11,770 (11)*	103,163 (100)
2002	47,177 (45)	35,357 (34)	11,291 (11)	10,603 (10)*	104,428 (100)
2003	49,533 (46)	36,303 (34)	10,262 (10)	10,887 (10)*	106,986 (100)

*Number of adult and fawn females is projected from the % fawns of all females aged at the biological check stations (not from the ratio of fawn does to fawn bucks in the total deer harvest).

Distribution of the Harvest

The number of deer harvested in individual counties ranged from 68 to 2,735 (Table 5). Harvest exceeded 1,000 deer in 53 counties and 2,000 deer in 12 of those 53 counties. For the 7th consecutive year, no counties harvested more than 3,000 deer. The five counties with the highest total harvest were Steuben, Switzerland, Franklin, Washington, and Parke. The five counties with the lowest total harvest were Tipton, Benton, Hancock, Rush, and Marion. The antlered buck harvest exceeded 1,000 deer in 5 counties vs. 4 in 2002, while the antlerless harvest exceeded 1,000 deer in 16 counties vs. 14 counties in 2002. Antlerless deer comprised at least 50% of the total harvest in 67 of the state's 92 counties in 2003 vs. 71 counties in 2002.

Table 5. County-specific deer harvest in Indiana during 2003 (after adjustment for unknowns).

County	No. Harvested			County	No. Harvested		
	Antlered	Antler-less	Total*		Antlered	Antler-less	Total*
Adams	217	253	469	Lawrence	815	739	1,554
Allen	592	631	1,223	Madison	198	314	512
Bartholomew	482	445	927	Marion	140	125	264
Benton	83	60	143	Marshall	862	986	1,848
Blackford	123	183	306	Martin	734	791	1,525
Boone	150	143	292	Miami	548	558	1,106
Brown	832	730	1,562	Monroe	634	787	1,421
Carroll	299	390	690	Montgomery	430	472	902
Cass	514	565	1,079	Morgan	540	605	1,145
Clark	732	863	1,595	Newton	419	415	834
Clay	497	651	1,148	Noble	958	1,352	2,310
Clinton	159	138	297	Ohio	394	701	1,095
Crawford	723	663	1,386	Orange	817	1,190	2,007
Daviess	585	820	1,405	Owen	715	596	1,312
Dearborn	992	1,339	2,331	Parke	1,009	1,370	2,379
Decatur	208	113	321	Perry	920	975	1,896
Dekalb	698	809	1,507	Pike	742	900	1,642
Delaware	283	318	601	Porter	508	747	1,255
Dubois	669	1,004	1,673	Posey	681	589	1,269
Elkhart	531	570	1,102	Pulaski	545	565	1,110
Fayette	309	302	611	Putnam	797	914	1,712
Floyd	225	260	484	Randolph	243	252	495
Fountain	573	664	1,237	Ripley	733	869	1,602
Franklin	975	1,437	2,412	Rush	145	110	254
Fulton	588	780	1,368	St. Joseph	471	495	966
Gibson	566	598	1,164	Scott	385	430	814
Grant	286	282	568	Shelby	154	149	303
Greene	897	1,064	1,961	Spencer	699	637	1,336
Hamilton	171	110	281	Starke	539	554	1,093
Hancock	131	114	244	Steuben	1,174	1,561	2,735
Harrison	878	1,066	1,944	Sullivan	753	620	1,373
Hendricks	217	202	419	Switzerland	1,159	1,397	2,556
Henry	232	252	483	Tippecanoe	561	618	1,179
Howard	142	193	336	Tipton	49	19	68
Huntington	419	510	929	Union	210	219	429
Jackson	856	1,416	2,272	Vanderburgh	328	438	766
Jasper	553	567	1,120	Vermillion	410	450	859
Jay	349	552	901	Vigo	574	641	1,215
Jefferson	891	1,325	2,216	Wabash	573	469	1,041
Jennings	711	850	1,561	Warren	406	536	942
Johnson	244	262	506	Warrick	632	499	1,131
Knox	472	439	911	Washington	1,149	1,249	2,398
Kosciusko	1,047	1,084	2,131	Wayne	414	337	751
Lagrange	820	1,394	2,213	Wells	227	254	481
Lake	500	485	985	White	355	383	738
Laporte	826	1,115	1,941	Whitley	495	615	1,111

* Totals may be off +/- 1 due to rounding during partitioning of harvested deer of unknown sex or county.